

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. For the Examiner's convenience and reference, Applicant's remarks are presented in the order in which the corresponding issues were raised in the Office Action.

Please note that the following remarks are not intended to be an exhaustive enumeration of the distinctions between any cited references and the claimed invention. Rather, the distinctions identified and discussed below are presented solely by way of example to illustrate some of the differences between the claimed invention and the cited references. In addition, Applicants request that the Examiner carefully review any references discussed below to ensure that Applicants' understanding and discussion of the references, if any, is consistent with the Examiner's understanding.

In the Office Action, claims 6-11, 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,871,022 to Xu, and claims 15-21, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu in view of Applicants' alleged disclosure of prior art. By this Reply, Applicant has amended the specification and drawings for clarification. Currently, claims 1-11, 12-21, 23 and 24 are pending in this application, with claims 1-5 having been withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 6-11, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Xu because Xu fails to disclose or suggest at least "a first stage of interleavers, wherein each interleaver in the first stage is a fused-fiber interleaver; and a final stage including a thin film interleaver," as recited in claim 6. Xu does not appear to disclose, and the Office Action fails to point to any portion of Xu which discloses, a "a fused-fiber interleaver" first stage and "a final stage including a thin film interleaver."

Because Xu fails to disclose or suggest each and every claim element, Applicants submit that independent claim 6 is in condition for allowance. Claims 6-11, 13 and 14 each depend from independent claim 6 and are allowable at least for their dependence on an allowable independent claim. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 15-21, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu in view of Applicants' alleged disclosure of prior art because Xu fails to disclose or suggest at least "a final stage that interleaves the most densely packed channels," as recited in claim 15. Xu does not appear to disclose, and the Office Action fails to point to any portion of Xu which discloses, "a final stage that interleaves the most densely packed channels." The alleged disclosure of prior art¹ in the specification is not cited in the Office Action as correcting the deficiency of Xu.

Because the cited references fail to disclose or suggest each and every claim element, Applicants submit that independent claim 15 is in condition for allowance. Claims 15-21, 23 and 24 each depend from independent claim 15 and are allowable at least for their dependence on an allowable independent claim. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned if the Examiner believes that a telephone interview or Examiner's amendment will further the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,
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¹ Applicants do not necessarily agree with the Office Action's characterization of the specification's alleged disclosure of prior art.

Amendments to the Drawings

The attached Replacement Sheets include changes to Figures 6, 7 and 8. These Replacement Sheets replace the original sheets including Figures 6, 7 and 8.

Attachments: Replacement Sheets
Redline Sheets (3) Showing Changes

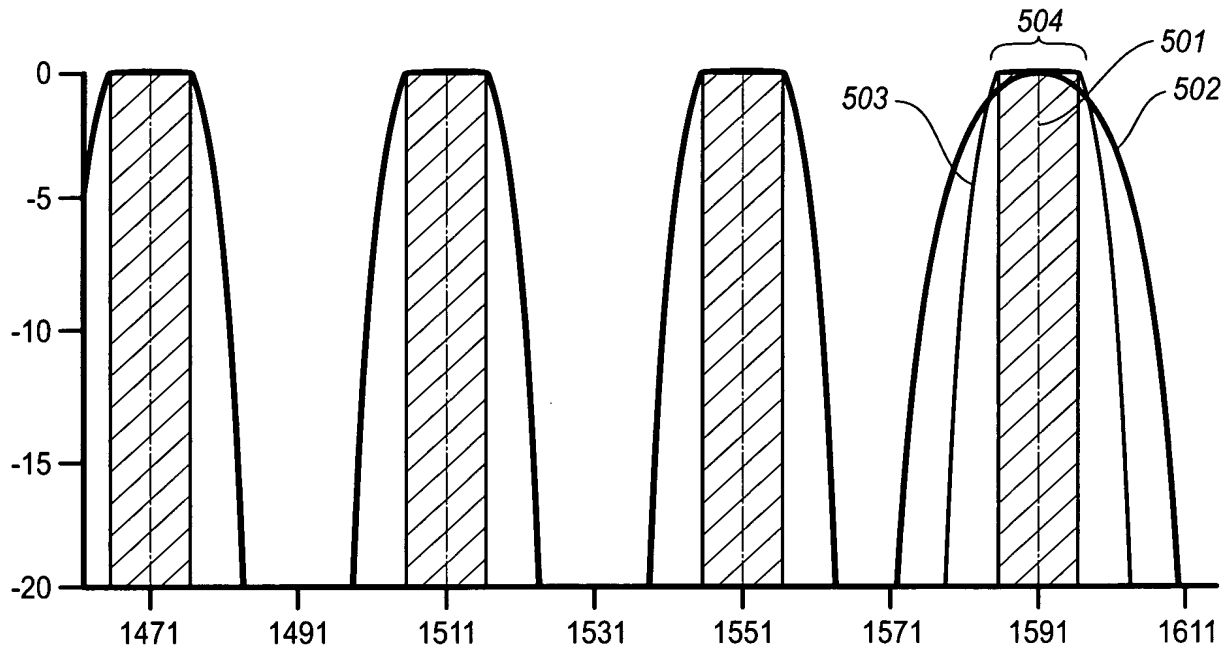


Fig. 5

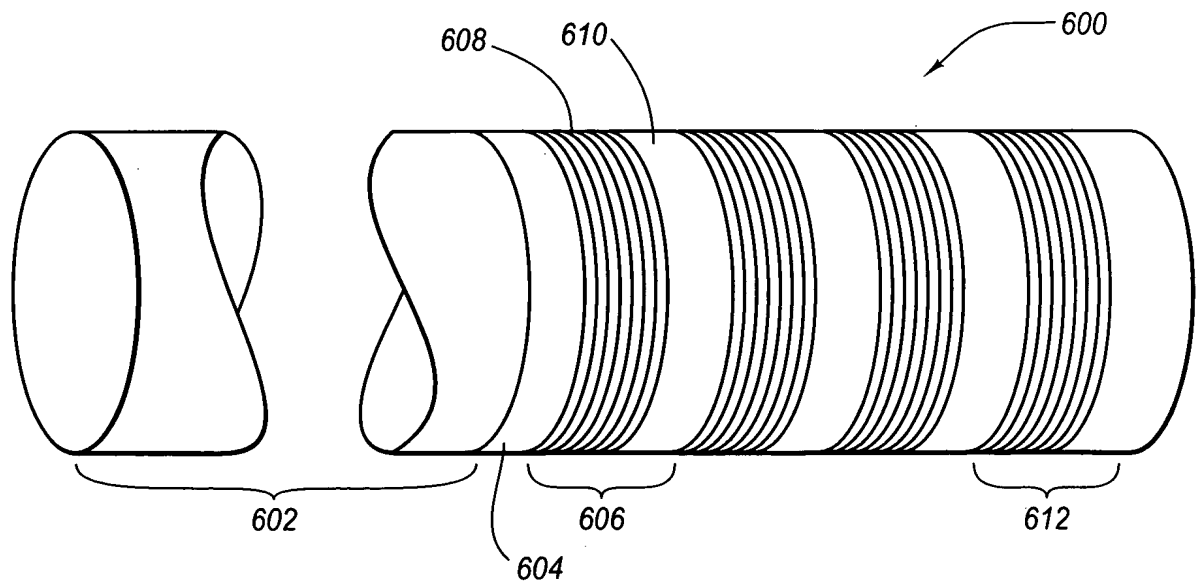


Fig. 6

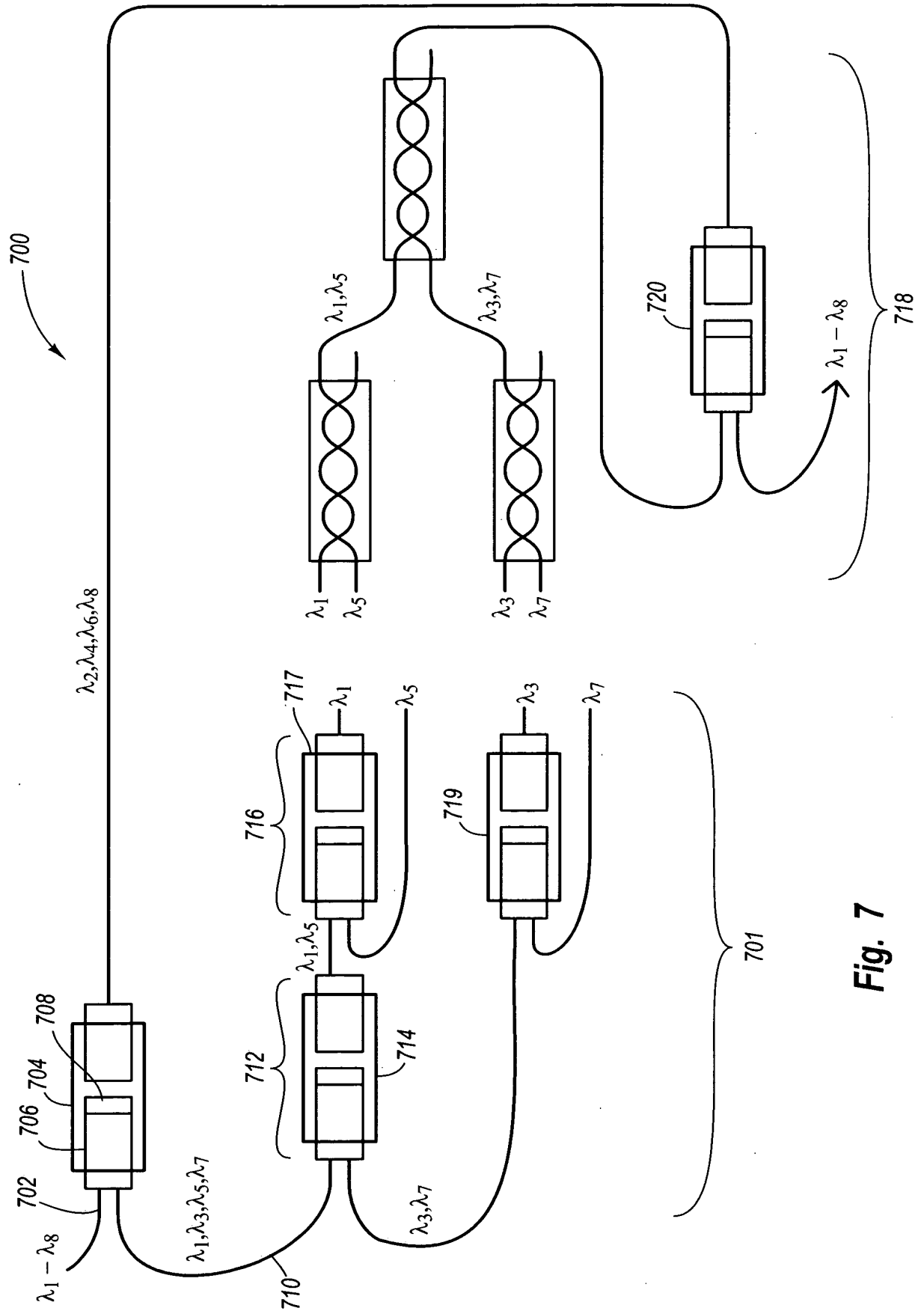


Fig. 7

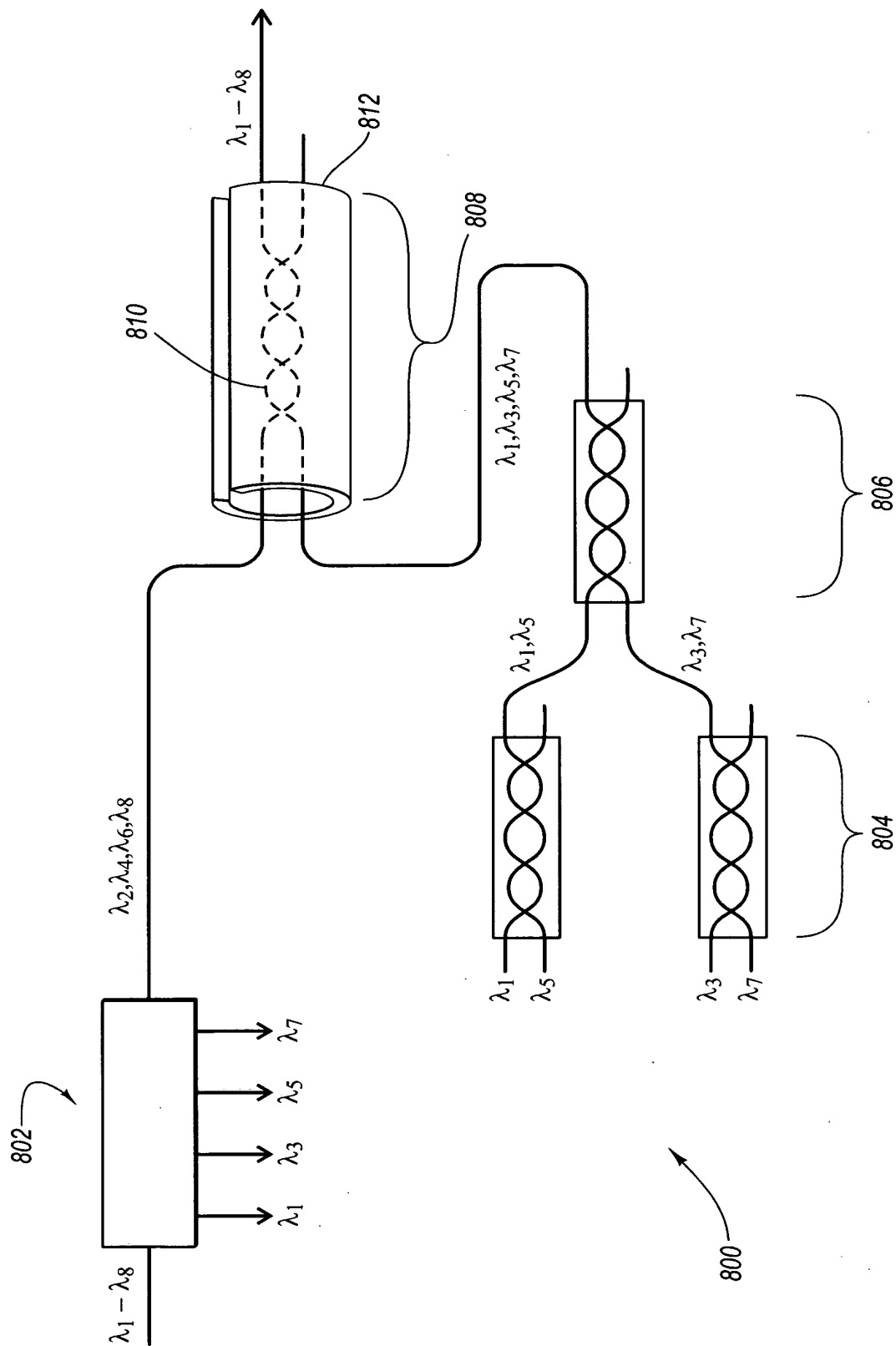


Fig. 8